

## **Internet Pioneers and Leaders Tell the FCC: You Don't Understand How the Internet Works**

### ***Internet creators and leading figures ask the FCC to cancel its vote repealing Net Neutrality protections***

To:

The Honorable Roger Wicker, Chair  
Senate Commerce Subcommittee on Communications, Technology, Innovation, and the Internet

The Honorable Brian Schatz, Ranking Member  
Senate Commerce Subcommittee on Communications, Technology, Innovation, and the Internet

The Honorable Marsha Blackburn, Chair  
House Energy Subcommittee on Communications and Technology

The Honorable Michael F. Doyle, Ranking Member  
House Energy Subcommittee on Communications and Technology

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Senator Wicker:

Senator Schatz:

Representative Blackburn:

Representative Doyle:

We are the pioneers and technologists who created and now operate the Internet, and some of the innovators and business people who, like many others, depend on it for our livelihood. We are writing to respectfully urge you to call on FCC Chairman Ajit Pai to cancel the December 14 vote on the FCC's proposed Restoring Internet Freedom Order ([WC Docket No. 17-108](#)).

This proposed Order would repeal key network neutrality protections that prevent Internet access providers from blocking content, websites and applications, slowing or speeding up services or classes of service, and charging online services for access or fast lanes to Internet access providers' customers. The proposed Order would also repeal oversight over other unreasonable discrimination and unreasonable practices, and over interconnection with last-mile Internet access providers. The proposed Order removes long-standing FCC oversight over Internet

access providers without an adequate replacement to protect consumers, free markets and online innovation.

It is important to understand that the FCC's proposed Order is based on a flawed and factually inaccurate understanding of Internet technology. These flaws and inaccuracies were documented in detail in a [43-page-long joint comment](#) signed by over 200 of the most prominent Internet pioneers and engineers and submitted to the FCC on July 17, 2017.

Despite this comment, the FCC did not correct its misunderstandings, but instead premised the proposed Order on the very technical flaws the comment explained. The current technically-incorrect order discards decades of careful work by FCC chairs from both parties, who understood the threats that Internet access providers could pose to open markets on the Internet.

The experts' comment was not the only one the FCC ignored. Over 23 million comments have been submitted by a public that is clearly passionate about protecting the Internet. The FCC could not possibly have considered these adequately.

Indeed, breaking with established practice, the FCC has not held a single open public meeting to hear from citizens and experts about the proposed Order.

Furthermore, the FCC's online comment system has been plagued by major problems that the FCC has not had time to investigate. These include bot-generated comments that impersonated Americans, including dead people, and an unexplained outage of the FCC's on-line comment system that occurred at the very moment TV host John Oliver was encouraging Americans to submit comments to the system.

Compounding our concern, the FCC has failed to respond to Freedom of Information Act requests about these incidents and failed to provide information to a New York State Attorney General's investigation of them.

We therefore call on you to urge FCC Chairman Pai to cancel the FCC's vote. The FCC's rushed and technically incorrect proposed Order to repeal net neutrality protections without any replacement is an imminent threat to the Internet we worked so hard to create. It should be stopped.

Signed,

Frederick J. Baker, IETF Chair 1996-2001, ISOC Board Chair 2002-2006  
Mitchell Baker, Executive Chairwoman, Mozilla Foundation

Steven M. Bellovin, Internet pioneer, FTC Chief Technologist, 2012-2013  
Tim Berners-Lee, inventor of the World Wide Web & professor, MIT  
John Borthwick, CEO, Betaworks  
Scott O. Bradner, Internet pioneer  
Vinton G. Cerf, Internet pioneer  
Stephen D. Crocker, Internet pioneer  
Whitfield Diffie, inventor of public-key cryptography  
David J. Farber, Internet pioneer, FCC Chief Technologist 1999-2000  
Dewayne Hendricks, CEO Tetherless Access  
Martin E. Hellman, Internet security pioneer  
Brewster Kahle, Internet pioneer, founder, Internet Archive  
Susan Landau, cybersecurity expert & professor, Tufts University  
Theodor Holm Nelson, hypertext pioneer  
David P. Reed, Internet pioneer  
Jennifer Rexford, Chair of Computer Science, Princeton University  
Ronald L. Rivest, co-inventor of RSA public-key encryption algorithm  
Paul Vixie, CEO, Internet pioneer  
Stephen Wolff, Internet pioneer  
Steve Wozniak, co-founder, Apple Computer

Cc:

Members of the Senate Commerce Subcommittee on Communications, Technology, Innovation, and the Internet  
Members of the House Energy Subcommittee on Communications and Technology  
Federal Communications Commissioners

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